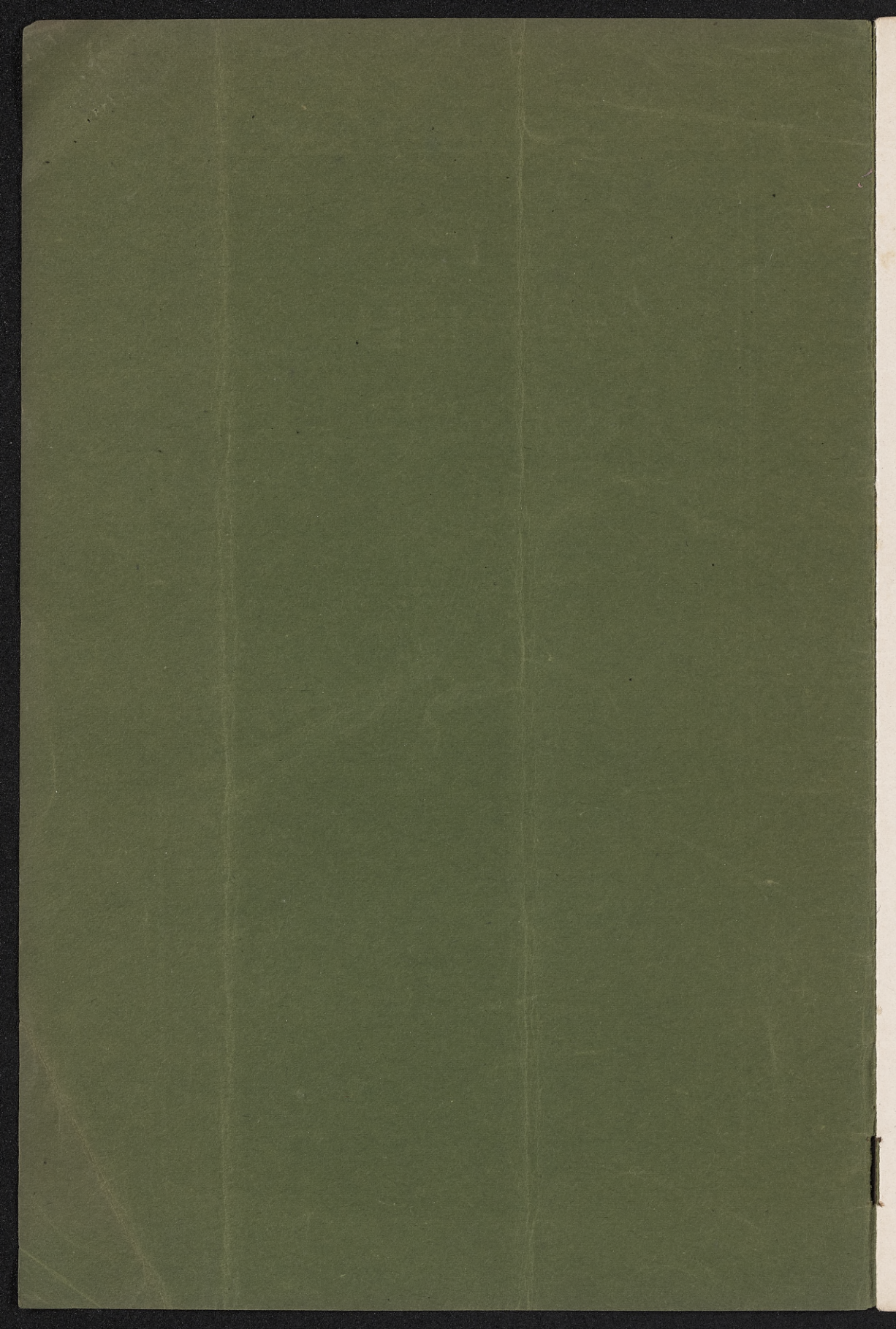


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IRISH HOME RULE





SPEECH DELIVERED
BY
SENATOR J. B. CURTIN

(Now Democratic Candidate for Governor)

In the Senate of California, January 31, 1913, on the
Following Resolutions :

RESOLUTION No. 10.

Relative to Irish Home Rule.

WHEREAS, After years of adversity, work and hope, but never of despair, on the part of the Irish nation, the British House of Commons recently passed the Irish home rule bill, thereby recognizing the eternal truth that an intelligent people should be sovereign in governmental affairs which concern themselves; and

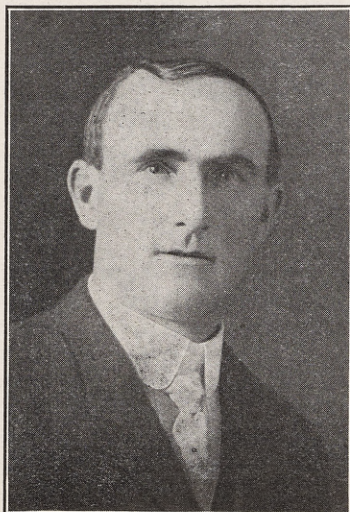
WHEREAS, It is meet that on the great occasion of the granting of Irish home rule that the fairest of all free States, California, should extend its hearty congratulations to the Irish people, and to the British House of Commons which granted the same; therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Assembly of the State of California, and the Senate, jointly, constituting the Legislature of the State of California, That we hereby extend on behalf of the State, our hearty congratulations to the Irish people on their increased assumption of powers and responsibilities, and to the British nation for the act of frank justice rendered.

Resolved, That the Governor of California be and he is hereby requested to transmit a certified copy of these resolutions to the Hon. John E. Redmond, leader of the Irish party, and to Premier Asquith of the British Parliament.

The question being on the adoption of the resolution.

"CONSTITUTIONAL JOHN"



16 YEARS IN THE SENATE

Senator Curtin addressed the Senate as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW MEMBERS: Might I ask the indulgence of this body for a short time, to give expression to a few words on the subject of this resolution, "Relative to Irish Home Rule"?

My friends, there is no country beneath the sun that has a better right to claim attention of any Legislature in the American Union than has dear old Ireland.

It is not my purpose at this time to occupy your attention with a history of Ireland. That history is undoubtedly familiar to us all. By way of introduction of the two names I shall refer to, I may say, that from early history until about the year 1800 Ireland had self-government, and she was a prosperous and happy land until England's complications with other nations brought about internal dissensions in Ireland—dissensions that rent her in twain—dissensions that separated the North from the South and left Ireland indeed unhappy. Every attempt, even in civil life, made by any of Ireland's illustrious sons to emancipate his co-religionists of the Catholic faith and also the dissenting Protestants from the disabilities which attended and degraded them—every effort made to win religious liberty—every struggle made to again obtain legislative independence for that island, was met with stubborn resistance, and it resulted in the execution of many an Irish patriot. While in that deplorable state, her lamentable condition was taken advantage of and her sovereignty destroyed, and her right of self-government was terminated about the year 1800 by acts of the British Parliament, and with unremitting energy she has ever since struggled to gain it back, and by this resolution we express our gratification that her struggles seem soon to be fruitful. About the year 1803, a young man, but then twenty-four years of age, wrote a declaration of principles for the future government of Ireland, if the efforts for her future government then being made were successful, and that declaration was called "The Provisional Government for the People of Ireland," and the man who wrote it was the immortal Robert Emmet. That declaration has been frequently referred to as "Emmet's Manifesto."

For that "offense," as it was then called, Emmet was charged with treason and his tragic end is the blackest spot in all England's history. At that time Emmet was engaged to a beautiful and highly accomplished young lady—Sarah Curran—the daughter of John Philpot Curran, the most eloquent man who ever stood before a court or jury in any land at any time in all history. Because of her devotion to him and of her grief over his future, should he be captured, his manly impulses caused him to come out of the seclusion to whence he had fled when he became aware that nothing but his life would appease the law then administered by corrupt courts and packed juries in all cases where the life or liberty of an Irish subject was at issue. It was while offering consolation to the girl he loved that he was arrested, charged with treason, tried and convicted by a jury before Lord Norbury in Dublin, and was executed at Downpatrick, Ireland, on October 21, 1803.

Mr. President and fellow members, all history does not record any words so eloquent as those uttered by Robert Emmet on that fateful date when asked by Lord Norbury what had he to say why sentence should not be pronounced upon him according to law. The response given by Emmet stands today as the masterpiece in all our literature. Would that I could at this time read it all to you, but the hour does not permit it, and I therefore give you his concluding words as he stood in the shadow of death: "I have but one request to ask at my departure from this world; it is, the charity of its silence. Let no man write my epitaph; for, as no man who knows my motives dares now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance

aspersion. Let them and me rest in obscurity and peace, and my tomb remain uninscribed and my memory in oblivion, until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not until then, let my epitaph be written. I have done."

Mr. President and fellow members, in carrying out that awful sentence of the law, it is recorded that the court directed that there be two men then confined in the prison in Dublin who would take that body out upon a lonely sidehill and in the ground unmarked, bury it for all time so that the grave of Robert Emmet would be unknown, and one of those men in carrying out that sentence, while carrying the body, broke from a weeping willow tree a couple of branches and planted them at the head of the grave, and when the work of burial was over they were returned to prison and quickly transported to Van Diemens Land, where they remained until they became very old. One of the two men was allowed to return to Ireland some twenty-eight years afterward, and when he arrived he sought the grave of Robert Emmet; and, my friends, from the inspiration thus furnished, the immortal Thomas Moore wrote these beautiful lines:

"Pray tell me, I said to an old man who strayed
Drooping o'er the grave that his own hands had made;
Pray tell me the name of the tenant that sleeps
Under yon mossy slab where the lone willow weeps.
Not a stone in the grave bears the name of the dead,
And yonder black slab declares not whose spirit has fled.

"In silence he bowed and beckoned me nigh,
Then stood on the grave and said with a sigh:
'He told them—commanded them the lines o'er his grave
Should never be traced by the hand of a slave.'
You see we obeyed him; 'tis now twenty-eight years,
Yet we come here to moisten his grave with our tears."

And also these beautiful lines:

"O breathe not his name—let it sleep in the shade
Where cold and unhonored his relics are laid;
Sad, silent, and dark be the tears that we shed,
As the night dew that falls on the grass o'er his head.

"But the night dew that falls, though in silence it weeps,
Shall brighten with verdure the grave where he sleeps;
And the tear that we shed, though in secret it rolls,
Shall long keep his memory green in our souls."

Today, in Ireland, of all her patriots, the dearest and most revered name is that of Robert Emmet, and from his grave in words more potent than those of any living man, he is still appealing for her liberty. Let us bow in reverent commemoration of the ideal patriot of Ireland's heroic period. Let us join with her and rejoice that the prejudices and the hatred that have kept obscure the grave of Robert Emmet have long since died away and that patriot who, when facing the executioner, uttered that inspiring address, and begged in vain for the charity of silence and left his epitaph for other times and other men, has become the favorite hero of popular liberty, his name above the need of eulogy, and his motives beyond the reach of malice.

And here, my friends, let me pay a tribute to that lovely girl, Emmet's sweetheart—Sarah Curran. All history attests that she was the noblest type of womanhood—gentle, kind and affectionate; and because of her devotion to Emmet and that her loneliness during his seclusion was the cause of his return to offer her consolation, her grief over his sad fate rendered her life truly sad. Her parents took her to France and to Italy, and all the crowned heads of Europe offered her consolation; but it was in vain. And why not in vain? No human plummet has ever sounded the depths of a woman's love. No surveyor's chain will ever mark the limits of a woman's patient devotion, and only the wings of the Archangel will ever transcend that pinnacle to which the sublime principle of self-sacrifice exalts a woman's soul. It was because of her noble attributes that the Bard of Ireland immortalized her in his beautiful poem, "She Is Far from the Land."

My friends, in those stirring times around the years 1800 and 1803, there is another name that was brought forth—a name that shines bright on the pages of Ireland's history—a name that is heard on the 17th day of every March in every land in the civilized world, and that name is James Napper-Tandy, familiarly called Napper-Tandy. About that period there was formed in the city of Dublin a society called the United Irishmen. It had for its purpose the diffusion of education among all Irish subjects and to raise money and provide the means for restoration to Ireland of her right to self-government. Napper-Tandy was secretary of that society. About that time the British Parliament had passed an Act making it a death penalty to float the green flag of Erin or to wear the Irish emblem—the shamrock.

For his part in that society, Napper-Tandy was arrested, charged with treason. He was defended by John Philpot Curran, and on May 19, 1800, was acquitted. He was again arrested on a similar charge, and seeing no justice to be had before a corrupt court and a packed jury, he pleaded guilty to the charge and in April, 1801, was sentenced to death; but his sentence was commuted and he was exiled to France, where he died on August 24, 1803.

Fellow Senators, within the phraseology of our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," abides a sentiment that finds a responsive throb in the heart of every American wherever it is sung. It writes the history of our country as in the year 1812. Out of veneration to the "Stars and Stripes" we rise and do it homage. In Ireland's anthem, "The Wearing of the Green," abides a sentiment that strikes a responsive chord in the heart of every man, woman and child through whose veins flows even one drop of Irish blood. It writes Ireland's history as it was in 1800, and in it is a beautiful tribute to America. It is because of its beautiful sentiments that I shall crave your indulgence while I recite it:

"THE WEARING OF THE GREEN."

O Paddy, dear, and did you hear the news that's going round?
The shamrock is forbid by law to grow on Irish ground;
St. Patrick's Day no more we'll keep; his colors can't be seen;
For there's a bloody law against the wearing of the green.
I met with Napper-Tandy, and he took me by the hand,
And he said, "How's poor old Ireland, and how does she stand?"
She's the most distressful country that ever yet was seen;
They are hanging men and women for the wearing of the green.

Oh, if the color we must wear is England's cruel red,
Sure Ireland's sons will ne'er forget the blood that they have shed,
You may take the shamrock from your hat and cast it on the sod,

But 'twill take root and flourish there, though under foot 'tis trod,
When law can stop the blades of grass from growing as they grow,
And when the leaves in summer-time their verdure dare not show,
Then I will change the color I wear in my caubeen;
But till that day, please God, I'll stick to wearing of the green.

But if at last our color should be torn from Ireland's heart,
Her sons with shame and sorrow from the dear old isle will part;
I've heard a whisper of a country that lies beyond the sea,
Where rich and poor stand equal in the light of freedom's day.
O Erin, must we leave you, driven by a tyrant's hand?
Must we ask a mother's blessing from a strange and distant land?
Where the cruel cross of England shall nevermore be seen,
And where, please God, we'll live and die still wearing of the green.

Mr. President and fellow members, who is there in all these United States who would raise a voice against an Irishman floating the green flag or wearing the green in our glorious land of the free? I apprehend there is no one who would do so.

Ireland's contribution to the cause of freedom entitles her people to our everlasting gratitude, and we may well pause in our busy activities and voice our appreciation of her patient efforts for self-government.

My friends, in those days of the early history of our country, Ireland furnished many of the men who paved the way for our present greatness.

They drew the inspiration of this Republic from the spirit of resistance to unwarranted authority.

They consecrated their lives and fortunes in the cause of human freedom.

From Lexington to Yorktown, with sword and bayonet, they wrote an imperishable record on the tablets of American history. In every struggle in that memorable war, the Irish sword flashed in the van of victory. In every contest it was on the side of freedom, and though sometimes defeated, has never been sheathed with dishonor.

Among those heroes, who, like Barry, fought the battles of freedom, were Gen. John Stark, the hero of Bennington; General Anthony Wayne, the hero of Germantown; General Richard Montgomery, the hero of Cowpens; General Moylon, who was side by side with Washington on every field; Knox's artillery and Morgan's riflemen—all Irishmen—wrote the history of the Battle of Monmouth.

General Joseph Warren, the son of an Irishman, saw his 453 heroes wafted heavenward by the beat of angels' wings from the summit of Bunker Hill, and he too, ere he left that battlefield, sacrificed his life in the cause of freedom.

My friends, when we call the roll of honor of those who participated in that war, we find no names that shine brighter than those of the sons of Ireland and their descendants.

If we turn to the Constitution of our country, we find thereon the names of Ireland's descendants in the persons of the illustrious Charles Carroll, Thomas Fitzsimmons and Daniel Carroll. When the war of the Revolution was over, and Benjamin Franklin was the first American minister to England, the British minister asked him this question: "Please, Sir Franklin, state the different nationalities in the American army in the war of the Revolution." Think of his reply, which is a matter of record today. His answer was: "Sixty-seven per cent Irish, twenty-two per cent other nationalities, and eleven per cent native born." Think of it, my friends, it was sixty-seven per cent Irishmen who raised the American flag in victory at the battle at Lexington and who went down with it in defeat

at Bunker Hill. It was sixty-seven per cent Irishmen who, without firing a gun, but with drawn swords, fought with that flag in glorious victory at Stony Point. It was sixty-seven per cent Irishmen in the army that sent those bullets to victory at Camden and Eutaw Springs. It was sixty-seven per cent Irishmen in that small army on that bleak cold night of December 25, 1776, that filled the boats and, with George Washington, crossed the ice-blocked Delaware River and captured those hired Hessians in the battle of Trenton. It was sixty-seven per cent Irish blood that crimsoned the snows that covered the grounds under the starless nights at Valley Forge. It was sixty-seven per cent of Irish voices that sent patriotic songs and solemn prayers heavenward at Yorktown, and, sirs, it was sixty-seven per cent of Irishmen that marched home with the Father of this Country after eight long years of weary battle to a glorious victory—a victory that established on this land the lasting union of these United States.

May we not well be proud of a people that rendered such valiant aid in establishing this land of freedom? May we not feel proud of our attachment for a people who began their struggles in 1800 to restore their government, by hanging in the banquet hall at Donegal Arms the portrait of Benjamin Franklin and beneath it the motto, "Where liberty is, there is my country," and ended with a toast to our country, "Lasting freedom and prosperity to the United States of America."

That historical friendly national interest spoken so feelingly of by Washington, Jefferson and Monroe continued, and between 1800 and 1861 Ireland was sending her children to populate our country and we have never asked them to renounce their affection for their native land. In 1848, the star upon Ireland's horizon was growing brighter than before, since 1800, and efforts were again made to secure Ireland's freedom. At that period a mass meeting was called in the city of Dublin and it was presided over by William Smith O'Brien. Thomas Francis Meagher addressed the meeting, urging all Ireland to strive for self-government and that was an offense punishable by death. They were arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged and drawn in quarters. Through the intercession of the Empress of Austria, their sentence was commuted and they were exiled to Australia for life. Long years afterward, William Smith O'Brien was allowed to come and remain in Italy, where he died, and his remains were brought home and the longest funeral procession that ever followed a man to his grave through the city of Dublin followed William Smith O'Brien to his eternal home. Thomas Francis Meagher escaped from Australia and came to New York in 1852 and began the publication of the *New York Freeman's Journal*, then one of the most ably edited papers in New York, out of which he amassed a considerable fortune. When the war of the South broke out—when misguided sons sought to disintegrate this Union and found an aristocracy on its ruins, and sent Mason and Slidel on the British ship *Trent*, which had run the blockade at the Port of Charleston, South Carolina, and which was pursued by the American ship *San Jacinto*, and Mason and Slidel were seized on the vessel and taken back to Boston and there was imminent danger of a war with England as a result of their seizure, a mass meeting was called in the city of Dublin for the purpose of raising funds to defray the expense of sending every Irish soldier and sailor to America to fight for the preservation of the American Union, and at that meeting, in an address, it was said: "We must fight for the preservation of the American Union—we must save the American Union at all hazards; we must save it for our countrymen there—for their children and for ours—for with the American Union lost our doom is sealed."

Fellow Senators, they did aid in saving the American Union. On every battlefield in that war, Irish blood was shed in defense of our Union. You may call the roll of honor on all those battlefields and you will find that

Erin's sons were at the foreground in every battle. The lamented Thomas Francis Meagher mustered the 69th New York regiment—every man of whom was a son of Erin and wore a uniform of green, and they carried the green flag. On the 21st of July, 1861, in the battle of Bull Run, when the Union army was routed and beating a retreat, and was pursued by the Southern Black Horse cavalry, that 69th New York regiment, commanded then by Colonel Michael F. Corcoran, turned upon that cavalry, and with drawn swords and "like lions leaping at a foe, when mad with hunger's pang," they charged and literally cut that cavalry to pieces and saved the rear of the Union army from annihilation. In that battle besides the 69th New York regiment, there was the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th New York regiments—all Irishmen.

On December 13, 1862, in the battle of Fredericksburg, there were the 63d, 69th and 88th New York regiments, all Irishmen, and they were there under the command of Colonel Thomas Francis Meagher. Their green flag was shot to pieces, and when the day was turning against the Union army, Meagher scaled the walls of Fredericksburg and shouted to his regiments: "Boys, our green flag has been shot to pieces, but there is more green here yet. Let us wear the green in our hats and fight to victory," and they tore sprigs of boxwood from the hedge, and put it in their hats and fought until the battle was over.

Fellow Senators, of the battle of Fredericksburg, John Boyle O'Reilly dedicated a poem in which this verse occurs:

"O God, what a pity," they cry in their cover,
As rifles are readied and bayonets made tight;
'Tis Meagher and his fellows, their caps have green clover;
'Tis Greek to Greek now for the rest of the fight."

Twelve hundred the column, their rent flag before them,
With Meagher at their head, they have dashed at the hill.
Their foemen are proud of the country that bore them;
But, Irish in love, they are enemies still.

Out rings the fierce word, "Let them have it." The rifles
Are emptied point-blank in the hearts of the foe;
It is green against green, but a principle stifles
The Irishman's love in the Georgian's blow.

The column has reeled, but it is not defeated;
In front of the guns they reform and attack;
Six times they have done it, and six times retreated;
Twelve hundred they came, and two hundred go back:

Two hundred go back with the chivalrous story;
The wild day is closed in the night's solemn shroud;
A thousand lie dead, but their death was a glory
That calls not for tears—the Green Badges are proud.

Fellow Senators, was it not the son of an Irishman, that intrepid little Phil Sheridan, to whom Grant said with reference to Winchester, "Go in," and post haste didn't he ride that fifteen miles and "go in"? And didn't he lead his division of the Union army to victory at Perrysville and Stone River? Was it not the son of an Irishman, Major General Edward O. Ord, who led his army to victory at Dranesville, Vicksburg, Fort Harrison and Petersburg? There was Gen. Jos. Mulligan, who commanded at the battle of Lexington, and saved Missouri to the Union, and when wounded

at Winchester, and being carried from the battlefield said: "Lay me down and save the flag." It was the New York and Massachusetts regiments of all Irishmen that bore the brunt of the six days' battle at the Sunken Roads and Antietam. At Gettysburg, the Waterloo of the Confederacy, it was Col. O'Rourke and his Massachusetts regiment of all Irishmen that held Little Round Top in the fiercest of that fight. Why, sirs, you could call the roll of honor until the last name was reached, and around none would you place a laurel where it would shine brighter than on those of Irish blood.

When the war was over, in appreciation of his splendid services, President Grant appointed Meagher the first Governor of Montana Territory, and while coming down the Missouri River on the night of July 4, 1865, he accidentally fell overboard and with one splash of water his body passed from sight and that finished scholar, that brilliant orator, that brave soldier, Thomas Francis Meagher, was no more. Today, in the city of Butte, Montana, stands a heroic statue to his memory.

Now, fellow Senators, if I have occupied too much of your time in these busy moments, I trust I may be pardoned. It is to me the proudest privilege in my years of service here. My great-grand-uncle, Commodore John Barry—an Irishman to the core, and for whom I was named, and for whom my only son is named—is the accredited founder of the American navy. He won the first and also the last naval victory in the War of the Revolution, and loving hands erected o'er his grave in Philadelphia a beautiful monument and the Congress of the United States, without a dissenting vote, appropriated sixty thousand dollars to erect, and did erect, in the grounds of the national capitol at Washington, a heroic statue to the memory of Commodore John Barry. I had another uncle, Andrew Corcoran, who was on a British battleship at Quebec when the call to aid the American Union was in the city of Dublin in 1861, and he responded to that call and was with Admiral Farragut when he cut the cable of hulls that misguided sons had stretched across the Mississippi River, and therefore I respond cheerfully to that sentiment:

"No matter where in any land the Irish race are seen,

Their one and only thought is on that little isle so green."

To dear old Ireland, I can with much feeling devote time to do her reverence. Although many of you may not be of her faith or descend from her people, yet you can join in a slight way toward expressing good will and a fond hope for her deliverance, and thus show that we are interested in her common welfare.

On every field of American war their blood has been shed in our defense.

There is no instance where an Irish sword has been drawn against the cause of freedom.

Ireland has given us the brightest lights that adorn our legal profession, and has given us those who are among the highest type of our citizenship, and the noblest mothers in our land.

She has contributed unsparingly her children to enrich our literature.

She has sent the ministers of her faith to spread among us the truth of the gospel and the precepts of her holy religion.

She has helped watch through her distressful tears the splendid efforts of her children to maintain in this land the fair and equal chance for all, then and still denied them in the country that gave them birth.

Let us unanimously adopt this resolution and join with the Irish people in a fervent prayer that their country will soon be given Home Rule, for which they have longed and patiently striven. I hope, therefore, there will not be one dissenting vote on this resolution.

Resolution unanimously adopted.

